

European Attempts to Govern African Youths by Raising Awareness of the Risks of Migration: Ethnography of an Encounter

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Abstract

Contemporary EU governance of migration outside its territorial borders aims to control mobility through policing measures, but also to shape the subjectivities of potential migrants so that they 'discipline themselves' to fit European immigration priorities. This is illustrated by the organisation by intergovernmental and non-governmental agencies, in several African countries, of 'information' campaigns and participatory activities to convince youths to stay rather than emigrate. Through an ethnographic account of my encounter with the leaders of a youth group involved in participatory activities in Dakar (Senegal), this article explores the assumption that youths can be governed in this way. I argue that awareness-raising initiatives had little hold over the thoughts of local youths, and were reappropriated by the association leaders I met. This was largely due to 'discontinuities' between agencies' and local youths' perceptions of migration and development, as well as NGOs' past and present work with youth group leaders. Theoretically, these conclusions add to research emphasising the force of human mobility over EU policing measures, whilst also highlighting the agentive role of local dynamics.

Keywords: governmentality, awareness-raising, migration, development, Senegal

Since the early 2000s, European states have increasingly externalised their control of migration outside EU territorial borders, including to Africa in countries of the Maghreb and of the Sahel. One of the aims of this governmentality of mobility has been to control people's movements in 'transit' and departure countries with measures such as the Frontex, checkpoints *en route*, retention camps for migrants and the organisation of migrants' 'voluntary' return. Another aim has been, in a 'preventative' way, to discipline local states, as well as to shape the subjectivities of potential migrants so that they 'govern themselves' to fit European immigration needs (Pécoud 2013). This is illustrated by the training of local forces in many African countries in migration management and border control, as well as the organisation there of 'information' campaigns on the perils of migration to Europe.

This paper is concerned with European attempts to discipline African youths' thoughts by raising awareness of the risks of migration. Over the last decade, 'information' campaigns, usually funded by the EU and/or its member states and coordinated by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), have been organised in countries such as Niger (2007), Senegal (2007 and 2009), Mali (2008) and DRC (2009 and 2010). According to the IOM website, in 2016-17 'Aware migrants' – a major new campaign – was launched in fifteen African countries.¹ In addition to involving the national media, these awareness-raising campaigns have partly been delegated to NGOs and local civil society groups.

These initiatives have been based on the idea that more information will lead would-be migrants to rethink their plans. They have thus focused on dangers on the road (e.g. smugglers) and have promoted departure with a visa. In this context, leaving without a visa has often been described as 'irregular' or 'clandestine' migration, and departure with a visa labelled 'legal migration'.² Migrants' tough lives in Europe have also sometimes been highlighted as part of these events, as well as the idea that youths should engage in local development instead.

What is the relation between human mobility and people's subjectivity, and the EU governmentality of migration? The primacy of European states' control over people's movements is posited in work influenced by Agamben's (1998) writings on the power of the sovereign over migrants' lives. This idea is also indirectly conveyed in studies on the current form of EU governmentality of mobility. Feldman, drawing from Foucault and Ferguson, analyses European migration management as an 'apparatus' of heterogeneous and decentralised elements or an 'anonymous constellation of control' (2011: 44). In contrast to these studies, a recent and growing body of research puts forward the primacy of human mobility over EU control technologies, underlining migrants' agency in face of attempts to govern them (e.g. Squire 2011). Some of this scholarship argues for the 'autonomy of migration' from measures of control, highlighting the force of migrants' subjectivity and their projects, and analysing mobility as an expression of the freedom of movement or a political struggle (e.g. Tazzioli 2015; De Genova 2017). From the 'autonomy of migration' perspective, the production of new techniques of governmentality is a response to human movements only.

Ethnographies of local interactions with externalised EU policing measures in North and West Africa offer a more nuanced picture. They highlight the distressing effects of these measures in regions of 'transit' and departure. New obstacles to movements *en route* to and at the territorial borders of Europe make it harder for people to circulate within their own region (Choplin and Lombard 2014: 71-2, on the Mauritania-Senegal-Mali space). They oblige migrants to take more dangerous itineraries – exposing them to death at sea or in the desert, and to arrests and serious abuses, like in post-war Libya (see Andersson 2014: 98-130, on Mauritania, Morocco and Algeria). They also force migrants to spend long periods in 'transit' countries (e.g. Timera 2009, on Morocco). In regions of departure, policing measures and restrictive visa policies furthermore produce negative feelings of physical and existential immobility or of 'entrapment' (e.g. Gaibazzi 2015: 115-33, on the Gambia).

Simultaneously, these works underline that policing measures do not necessarily 'discipline' people. Migrants take other routes (e.g. Brachet 2010; Choplin and Lombard 2014: 72) and reconfigure the spaces in which they 'transit' (Bredeloup and Pliez 2005). Also, local state actors, such as the Senegalese forces working for the Frontex, sometimes encounter difficulties applying European measures and detecting the 'illegal migrant' (Andersson 2014: 98-130). Some local state agents even instrumentalise the externalisation of EU policing measures, as in Niger where the closure of the Libyan border has been used strategically to make business out of the 'transit' of migrants (Brachet 2005).

Besides the actions of states, present-day European governance of mobility involves the discourses and actors of aid (e.g. Fassin 2005, 2011; Makaremi 2009). In this context, intergovernmental organisations (IGOs), such as the IOM, have involved themselves in both humanitarian and border control projects in Africa (migrants' 'voluntary' return, training local forces in border control, and awareness-raising campaigns) so as to contain would-be migrants on the behalf of European governments (e.g. Brachet 2016). Indeed, despite their apparent neutrality and humanitarian rhetoric, these organisations – owing to their mode of funding – often convey the concerns of their most important member states (Geiger and Pécout 2014). At the same time, relatively little is known of the local experiences of recent IGO migration control activities in regions of departure and 'transit'. As for NGOs, they have engaged in humanitarian work to deal with the casualties caused by policing measures, for instance through 'search and rescue' operations at sea (Cuttitta 2017, on the Central Mediterranean) or in detention camps in the Maghreb and Sahel (Streiff-Fénard and Poutignat 2008, on Mauritania; Andersson 2014, on Mauritania and Spain). In this situation, NGOs are found to sometimes play a positive, caring, role for migrants as well as to make a political point in migrants' favour, but at times appear to be embedded in policing measures and to participate in the control of migrants (see Cuttitta 2017).

Besides IGOs and humanitarian organisations, development actors in regions of departure have partaken in European governance of mobility. Development NGOs, which rely heavily on European government funding, have organised training and income-generating projects to 'keep youths in', on top of facilitating with local civil society groups awareness-raising activities of the risks of migration to Europe. In the anthropology of development, the Western development apparatus is described by the poststructuralist critique as 'hegemonic' and controlling (e.g. Ferguson 1990; Escobar 1995). Ethnographies of development projects in contrast highlight local actors' agency and reinterpretation of development policies and projects (Crewe and Harrison 1998: 178-86; Mosse 2005). In this context, local development brokers are defined as 'translators' between different registers (Mosse and Lewis 2006: 13-7). Development brokerage is also associated with specific advantages, such as access to political or economic resources (Olivier de Sardan 2005: 173-4). Previous studies of the involvement of civil society actors (i.e. a women's collective and groups of repatriated migrants) in awareness-raising in Senegal, although focusing mainly on their leaders' discourses to the media, emphasise the role played by these resources in brokerage (Bouilly 2010; Pian 2010; Andersson 2014: 33-65).

This article seeks to contribute to these debates through an exploration of participatory activities organised in Dakar (Senegal) in 2008 to raise youths' awareness of and discourage 'clandestine emigration'. Following migrants' arrival by *pirogue*³ on the Spanish coasts, at least two national campaigns (2007 & 2009) against 'clandestine' or 'irregular' 'emigration' were launched by the Senegalese government and the IOM, with European funding. In this context, several NGOs, together with local civil society groups, organised participatory activities, theatre plays and musical events 'against clandestine emigration'. How

were these awareness-raising initiatives perceived by civil society leaders in Dakar, and in particular youth group leaders? Did they get involved or, rather, openly resist? Have these activities led to the creation of new subjectivities locally, such as more negative perceptions of migration, or youths deciding more often to stay and invest their efforts in local development? Do these 'preventative' measures, which focus on shaping people's thoughts before departure, 'govern' aspiring migrants more than physical barriers to mobility?

This paper is an ethnographic description of my encounter with the leaders of a youth group engaged in such activities.⁴ The first section focuses on their involvement in activity 'against clandestine emigration'. The second section describes the larger development context in which this involvement took place. The third touches on communication with 'other youths'. The fourth outlines some of the limits of such an involvement, after which I provide a discussion. The implications for the relation between human mobility and EU technologies of control are addressed in conclusion.

Involving oneself in activity 'against clandestine emigration'

I was first introduced to Souleymane in 2005. Souleymane had been described to me as someone particularly committed to developing his neighbourhood in Dakar's economically depressed suburbs. The young man, in his early twenties, did voluntary educational work and organised discussions on various social issues with youths in his locality. One day, when back on my 2008 fieldwork, I bumped into Souleymane again at an NGO workshop on migration. Souleymane explained to me that he was there in the context of a new project that his neighbourhood association was running. The project was highly participatory: initiated and funded by one of the association's long-term NGO-funders, it was an 'action research' project. According to Souleymane and fellow leaders Fatou and Sadio, its aim was for them to initially collect the views of neighbourhood youths on migration through open and participatory discussions. The plan was for the young leaders to then raise awareness among youths in the vicinity, built on the results emerging from the research. The project's objective, therefore, was not explicitly or openly to promote 'legal migration', nor to dissuade youths from leaving the country.

How did Souleymane, Fatou and Sadio justify their involvement in the project to others? With those potentially linked with development agencies, Souleymane would invoke the departures by *pirogue* and the many resulting deaths. Awareness-raising was also needed, he would argue, because of the existence of networks of smugglers in Africa and the risk of being swindled. Souleymane and his colleagues would argue that young people lacked knowledge of these conditions, including the 'legal' aspects of emigration, emphasising that they themselves were against 'illegal migration' or 'clandestine emigration'. He would even declare 'If you have a profession, you apply [for a visa], and then you have a work contract.⁵ You go to the embassy; a visa is not to be sold [by middlemen]! A visa is not to be sold – one just needs to pay the fee [to obtain it]'. And Fatou would add that 'one should not violate the laws of the country of arrival'. But at other times, Souleymane would express favourable opinions of the free movement of people and criticise the many obstacles to obtaining a visa.

Souleymane would say that the association was in fact working on all forms of migration, not just 'clandestine emigration'. In support of that, he would offer as evidence details of emigrants' hard lives and difficulties in finding work in Europe, whatever their legal status, and argue that 'youths should know that Europe is not an El Dorado'. In addition to this project, Souleymane and colleagues were actively looking for funds to undertake other work on migration. Potentially accepting money from European embassies, or organisations such as the IOM, to raise awareness on migration did not pose a moral quandary for them.

To justify their involvement, the three leaders would also define themselves as committed to 'development'. In contrast to the majority of youths who criticised the government for its lack of support and were desperate to migrate, *they* did not count on the state to help them. They were entrepreneurial and, thus, willing to engage with 'development'. Referring to the jobs (e.g. petty trading) that many young Dakarais men refused to perform, they would argue that other youths should take more initiative too.

When Souleymane, Fatou and Sadio talked about being committed to 'development', it was the work of NGOs they had in mind. Indeed, to those associated with development organisations, they would emphasise that *they* had been 'trained' in the past and were willing to be 'trained' further by NGOs and acquire 'knowledge' (*des connaissances*), as opposed to seeking immediate financial gain. However, Sadio once expressed the tension between the value of this 'knowledge' and the value of money in the following terms:

So, in general, this is out of love. Everything is out of love. That is, everything we do. Sometimes, we have for instance the opportunity to go ... [he interrupts himself] – for example, we are lucky to be trained, we have experience, we are not waiting here for something [to happen]. (...) And you will also have the opportunity for instance if you are patient ... if, for instance, you do not see only that there is money at stake, [if you do not] have to [absolutely and immediately] succeed, then you will have the luck to travel, to rub shoulders with people, and so on and so forth. To enrich [your]self. That is, there are many ways to be rich. To be rich is not just to have money. That is, when one has knowledge, one is rich, because later knowledge can be exploited for money. But, one can [also] have money and not be rich. Because as time goes by ... for example, an elderly man who is in the market here – he is a jeweller – he earns for instance millions every day, but he has never studied. He has employed someone; he pays him a lot for calculations [i.e. to do his accounts]. So, if this elderly man had taken the time to accumulate knowledge, he would have done the work himself. Therefore, if one has knowledge then, bit by bit, one will later be able to expand to succeed in something else.

Souleymane, Fatou and Sadio talked of themselves as 'agents of development', 'missionaries' or 'guides' to other youths. And, at times, they would even counterpose their engagement in development to emigration. Many youths I met would have given a lot to benefit from the legal-migration contracts issued by Spain, but Souleymane would state that 'If everyone leaves, Africa will never develop'. Fatou would even assert that 'There are two groups [among youths of

the neighbourhood]: there are those who want to leave at all costs, and there are those who want to stay to work in the country for development'. And Sadio would make similar declarations, although also hinting that, as will later be seen, there are conditions to 'developing' instead of emigrating:

... for instance, you see youths who are born in Senegal, who grew up in Senegal, initially they refuse to leave the country. Why? Because they are agents, missionaries. ... [adding] This sort of person, he is aware, he knows that he has a very, very important role to play. He knows that sooner or later, if he stays here, with a little bit of support he will be able to succeed.

The context of discourses on 'legal migration' and commitment to 'development'

Souleymane, Fatou and Sadio's involvement in the project and their narratives are better understood in the wider context of past and present demand by NGOs for people like them. The project on migration, besides being supported by a long-term funder of the association, was not the first 'awareness-raising' operation the young leaders had been involved in. Since its foundation, the association, together with several NGOs, had raised awareness in the neighbourhood of themes as varied as gender equality, human rights, AIDS and malaria. For this reason, Sadio would explain, it did not pose a dilemma to apply for funds for projects aiming to limit departures from Senegal. The young leaders had also attended many NGO workshops where they were encouraged to 'appropriate' different development issues and develop skills such as of participatory methodologies, report drafting, and use of information technologies. They were defined as 'producers of knowledge' and 'agents of change' by the NGOs, who hoped they would initiate change in their community through participatory methods. Simultaneously, they knew that these workshops, the 'training' and the 'knowledge' (i.e. the knowledge of issues produced through participatory methods) acquired there often represented for NGOs a development objective in themselves.

Additionally, the involvement of Souleymane, Fatou and Sadio in the project on migration cannot be separated from opportunities development work represented for them. Cooperating with NGOs meant the potential for 'travel' (*les voyages*) within Senegal or overseas. International development organisations and youth networks organised meetings or retreats to bring together their 'civil society' members. In this context, Souleymane had travelled to France, one of his fellow leaders had visited Niger and another Egypt. Attending a meeting outside Dakar offered the chance to discover places that were otherwise beyond their reach, and allowed for social outings outside the gaze of the neighbourhood.

Sadio had mentioned that he and his co-workers were willing to acquire 'knowledge' through collaboration with NGOs rather than looking for immediate financial rewards. At other times, however, they would point out that 'Civil society still needs to eat!'. Development work represented a potential income-generating activity, and it was from this perspective that they could imagine 'staying to develop'. Until that point, the young leaders had received small transport allowances and *per diems* when attending workshops or training

sessions. Resources had also been available when they organised debates and forums, and for the project on migration Souleymane received modest remuneration. The young leaders were trying to develop and join new projects, and to this end attended many workshops and training sessions. Besides NGO work, they tried to generate an income within the association's setting, for example through the organisation of social for-profit events or by renting the premises to others. They also talked of setting up a GIE (*Groupeement d'intérêt économique*/Economic Interest Group), which would allow monthly contributing members to access state loans and start profitable businesses, such as raising chickens.

Moreover, Souleymane, Fatou and Sadio hoped that the many workshops attended would eventually translate into stable employment in an NGO. They would often mention 'success stories' that proved this was possible. One of the association's previous leaders had finally been employed by a French NGO conducting 'social work' in a Dakar suburb. The crowning success, however, seemed to be embodied in the trajectory of one of the very first leaders of the association. This early leader, invoked regularly in conversations, was now working in the local council of a European town. Thanks to the intervention of an NGO, he had been employed as an 'agent of development'. Fatou and Sadio's perception was that there was a demand in Europe for 'agents of development'. They would argue that local councils in Europe 'run after agents of development', whereas in Senegal it was they who 'ran after the local council' (to obtain their assistance).

Finally, working with NGOs could result in symbolic profits. In the past, Souleymane had managed to find a funder for a local women's group, a brokering operation that was probably positive for his position in the neighbourhood.

Talking with 'other youths'

Souleymane, Fatou and Sadio told me about 'debates' they had organised as part of the project to collect youths' views, as well as informal conversations they had with neighbourhood youths. I was able to attend one of these debates and several conversations. Many youths were keen to talk about migration, in particular about problems directly affecting them – for instance, the ostentatious behaviour of migrants returning to Senegal for holidays, the competitiveness of mothers over the success of their offspring, the power of European governments over their Senegalese counterparts, and the difference in value between the CFA and euro currencies.

Nevertheless, the organisation of public discussions to collect local youths' views on migration and their proposed 'solutions', not to mention the project's aim of raising awareness, had the potential to produce much conflict. For example, the young leaders recalled that they had had discussions with other youths on migrants' 'real lives' and difficulties in Europe. Souleymane had previously travelled to France to meet the NGO funder. On this occasion, he had been taken to visit a *foyer* (communal accommodation for migrants). On his return, he had told friends about things he saw in France. In particular, discussions had touched on migrants' housing conditions, life without legal documents, racism and discrimination, migrants' jobs and other ways to make

money (including drug dealing and prostitution), as well as migrants' careful preparation for their trips back to Senegal in order to impress. These discussions, the young leaders explained, had provoked a strong reaction. Some knew little about migrants' lives abroad or did not believe what they had heard. Resentment had been expressed both towards the racism demonstrated in Europe, and towards migrants themselves who, on return visits, enjoyed a privileged status on the basis of success that was more often a pretense than real. However, information on the realities of migration had not challenged youths' plans to emigrate.

Another sensitive question was 'legal migration'. Indeed, discussion of the need to leave with a visa, as opposed to taking a *pirogue*, was often perceived as an attempt to prevent others from leaving and thus from becoming successful. In a debate, someone once argued that 'Europe is not forbidden but it is regulated', meaning that travel should only be undertaken with a visa. This statement was met with much disagreement. Many contended that it was unfair that there were so many barriers to travel while Europeans could come so easily to Senegal. Someone asserted that the Senegalese government should not have signed agreements of cooperation with Spain for the readmission of illegal migrants, but should have instead bought the equipment required (boats, etc.) for migration. Many raised the human right of free movement. For many youths, 'legal migration' was simply not an alternative because there was little chance of obtaining a visa, and because a visa (obtained through a middleman) cost 4 million CFA. In contrast, taking a *pirogue* cost 300,000 CFA.⁶ The question for the majority was not whether or not to leave, but how best to succeed in migration. Sadio once publically argued that it was necessary to 'prepare' before leaving for Europe – that is, to inform oneself about the kind of job that could be done once there, as well as the requirements of countries of arrival. Echoing the Spanish and French governments' narratives on legal-migration agreements concluded with Senegal, he added that experience, education and skills were necessary for migration to Europe. This point led to a conflict with another youth, who disagreed that education and skills were requirements to leave.

From the perspective of many international and development organisations, youths should simply abandon their migration plans and invest their efforts locally instead. Souleymane, Fatou and Sadio also presented themselves as willing to stay to conduct development. However, they could not realistically encourage others to stay, let alone to develop the country, and neither could they tell them to be more entrepreneurial and not to count on the state to succeed. In fact, they had few alternatives to offer youths to convince them to stay, apart from... coming to the association to work with NGOs! Even in this case, the rewards were relative, as reflected in an exchange Sadio and I had:

A-L: But are you able to encourage them [neighbourhood youths] to stay here or is that something you can't do?

S: No, this is not something I can do. They are free in their choices. So, if they have something to do, a profession, there is no question – they have to go and work. But if they have left school and have no job to do, then instead of hanging around in the street they should come to the association.

A-L: In order to do what?

S: To try to be trained. That's it, to try to participate ... in the neighbourhood's development. This can be done.

A-L: But what kind of contribution can they make? A youth who doesn't do anything, who doesn't have a job, you would like to attract him here so that he trains himself, what can you offer him?

S: So, this is for instance Ibou's case. He has left school, so he has no job. But with the association we opened a small branch ... now, he is the one managing all the activities. Sometimes he can go and attend a workshop. For instance, he has done the AIDS training several times. So, this is something. This is not – how would I say it – this is not grandiose, but it is at least something.

However, even doing development work was not really an alternative for all, contrary to the impression left by Sadio. Indeed, there were conflicts in the neighbourhood between youths without schooling and those belonging to the association. The first group felt that opportunities to work with NGOs in the association were only given to pupils or students and that they themselves were discriminated against. Development work appeared to be portrayed much like migration – inaccessible to those with little schooling.

Though public debates on migration were contentious, many conflicts were avoided in practice. 'Debates' were open enough to allow many concerns to be touched upon. Also, most participants in the debate I attended were leaders from other associations, as opposed to neighbourhood youths. In fact, a considerable part of the work on migration of the young leaders seemed to involve meetings and training sessions with various NGOs in Dakar and other associations, as well as overseas with funding and partner organisations. Besides, participatory events on migration were sometimes organised and attended for reasons probably unplanned by agencies. For some youths, they meant welcome interruptions to long workless days. One meeting I attended had the air of a little treat in a monotonous suburban life: plastic chairs had been rented for the occasion, fritters and drinks were offered and some of the young women had dressed up and had their hair done. These gatherings also allowed the frustration of a life in immobility to be expressed and for migrants' high status to be challenged. Souleymane admitted that migrants' behaviour, including the preparation for their trips home, had in fact been one of his motivations for working on migration. Finally, I also heard rumours that many members of associations in Dakar attended NGOs' meetings on migration in the hope that these organisations would fund entrepreneurial activities or offer microcredit.

Some problems associated with development work

The young leaders expended considerable energy on making a living out of development work. However, there was not as much to do at the association as they would have wished. Sadio once told me that to kill time he used to play draughts on the association's computer, before someone stole the machine. A lot of time was spent in near-idleness paying visits to friends, drinking tea and listening to music.

They also found that the rewards of development work were long in coming and fairly negligible. The three of them occupied a socio-economic position that allowed them to spend time at the association and to say they did not count on the state to succeed, unlike other youths. Sadio's father was a long-term migrant in France who supported his family through remittances. Fatou's parents both held stable jobs. They were perhaps not under such pressure to succeed, and Souleymane used to say that he and the others worked in the 'hope' of future gain. However, he also once argued 'One cannot continue to do quasi-volunteering here: one gets older'. Furthermore, they ultimately compared the income that could be made from NGOs to the amounts brought in by migrants. I was straightforwardly told that when an NGO brought in CFA 5 million, the sum was meant for the whole neighbourhood or at least had to be shared, whereas leaving for Europe meant potentially bringing back one's own CFA 5 million. Finally, working with NGOs was not without consequences for the young leaders' status locally. Their parents were said to be losing patience due to the little income they were bringing in and their long wait for jobs, and in the neighbourhood there were many questions regarding why Souleymane, Fatou and Sadio spent time at the association: many thought that they did not want to work.

As seen earlier, contrary to what many agencies assume, it proved generally impossible for the three leaders to encourage other youths to stay to conduct 'development': to openly place migration in opposition to development. However, this is what Souleymane once did in practice. This, together with the small and uncertain rewards of development work, provoked a crisis and ultimately forced him to make an important decision.

Souleymane once had to go to France to meet the NGO funding the project. Later, at a workshop with another NGO in Dakar, Souleymane explained that when he came back from France he had encountered difficulties in his neighbourhood. At first, people did not even greet him. Many could not understand why he returned, given that he had had the chance to leave. They said he was 'crazy' and asked him what he thought he was going to do here now. This experience had a significant impact on Souleymane. It was also memorable for the other young leaders, who had stayed behind. Once, in Souleymane's absence, Sadio spontaneously brought up the subject:

S: With for instance the case of Souleymane who left to meet the NGO ... For instance, the first time Souleymane came back from France – that was so hard! This was a catastrophe here. They said 'Why hasn't he fled? Why hasn't he left to work for these Europeans?'

A-L: Who, his family?

Several youths involved at the association in chorus: No, his friends! His neighbourhood friends.

S: His neighbourhood friends. But he used to say that sooner or later he would be able to succeed. But one has to be patient in this profession. One has to be so, so, so patient.

A few months after this event, Souleymane had to make another trip to France to visit a partner organisation as part of the project on migration. Talking about the procedure to obtain his visa for his next trip, he said to me 'This time, this was a

real problem [to obtain the visa]. You give all the documents. Every time they try to find a way to refuse the visa – you wonder why’. Then came the day Souleymane left for France. A few days passed without his friends at the association hearing from him. Then the organisation in France made contact, saying that they had not seen Souleymane since his supposed arrival and that they were becoming concerned. However, a few weeks later, another leader received an email from Souleymane announcing that he had arrived in France, was now in a southern European country and that all was well. This time, he was staying.

Souleymane’s final move did not surprise many at the association. For the young leaders, NGO work was not worth staying for. However, his departure had put them in a delicate situation. Their contacts at the partner organisation were irritated and made it clear to them that they suspected they were ‘complicit’ in Souleymane’s ‘getaway’.

Discontinuities in perceptions of migration and development

I have illustrated that awareness-raising activities aiming to discourage departure to Europe were entered into by many youth group leaders in Dakar, rather than being openly resisted. However, these activities have not shaped the subjectivities of other youths in Dakar in the sense of leading them to review their migration project. There are indeed ‘discontinuities’ in the perceptions agencies and local youths hold of development and migration. In fact, by involving themselves in these activities, young brokers agentively reinterpreted them as an alternative way to succeed, as opposed to their involvement reflecting their own self-disciplining or decision to stay. Simultaneously, their agency had limits. I now discuss each of these points in more detail.

The three youth groups I met, as well as many other civil society groups in Dakar, involved themselves in activities organised by NGOs and/or IGOs to discourage ‘clandestine emigration’ and at times were even created for this purpose. They also promoted authoritarian discourses in line with European states’ interest in limiting immigration, albeit with occasional critical statements, in particular in the presence of those associated with development agencies and the media. Some civil society leaders restricted themselves to the risks associated with taking a *piroque*. However, many emphasised the imperative to have a visa when leaving, as well as the European preference for qualifications and diplomas. Moreover, some put forward youths’ moral duty to stay to develop the country. The leaders of the youth groups I met also described themselves in the presence of those associated with NGOs as youths who, in contrast to their peers, did not expect the state to develop the country but tried to take the initiative themselves. These discourses could easily be conflated by development agency staff with decisions not to migrate. The involvement of civil society groups in awareness-raising activities in Dakar fits, in appearance, with the idea of the power of EU states, acting via development actors, over the self-government of potential migrants. These interventions also, at first view, support the idea of the development system as ‘hegemonic’ and controlling (Ferguson 1990; Escobar 1995).

However, these activities did not ‘discipline’ other youths in the sense of leading them to abandon their migration project, let alone to engage in development of the country. Neither did they lead them to develop more negative perceptions of migration. This is largely due to the existence of ‘discontinuities’ (Long 1989) between the perceptions that agencies and local youths hold of migration and development. The involvement of many NGOs and IGOs in awareness-raising is based on at least two assumptions. First, African youths have local alternatives and therefore migration to Europe can be avoided. They could develop their country with NGOs: organising themselves in self-help groups, doing voluntary community work, training on issues such as AIDS and malaria, and setting up infrastructure. Second, youths would reconsider their plans to migrate had they more knowledge of the legal ‘requirements’ to travel to and stay in Europe, as well as of migrants’ tough lives there. However, for the majority of Dakar youths, leaving the country is inevitable; there are few local alternatives. Present-day migration aspirations in Senegal have been linked to, for instance, the necessity for youths to acquire wealth and build a house (Tall 2008), to fulfil themselves through the acquisition of global material goods (Fouquet 2008) and to escape the demands of solidarity networks and pursue their individual projects (Willems 2014; see also Mbodji 2008; Timera 2009). The exploration of the daily lives of non-migrants also highlights that under the combined effects of the scarcity of income-generating opportunities for men, women’s growing economic contribution and the importance nowadays of material wealth for status, staying in Dakar involves living in contradiction (Rodriguez 2015). Migration allows for the resolution of these tensions and thereby allows young men to enter adulthood and women to gain social respectability (Rodriguez 2017: 101-26). In this context, the obstacles and risks that arise today when travelling to and staying in Europe are increasingly considered as integral to migration (Melly 2011: 368; Alpes 2012, on Cameroon). The ability to overcome these risks is even becoming part of a hegemonic definition of masculinity (Rodriguez 2017: 127-54). As for Senegal’s ‘development’, for youths, it resonates more with employment and the acquisition of a stable income and money by families than with NGOs’ non-material definition. For Dakarais, this development is more likely to come from outside the country, typically from migration, than from Senegal.

In these circumstances, participatory meetings on migration were sensitive events. Many in Dakar were irritated by the awareness-raising campaigns, but particularly contentious were narratives that could be interpreted as attempts to prevent others from leaving, such as those emphasising the need for a visa to migrate. An emphasis on the need to have specific skills such as languages or education, or to ‘prepare’ before migrating, was similarly controversial. In this context, for the group leaders I met, encouraging others to stay, not to mention to ‘develop’, would not have been a wise strategy. It was, however, possible to discuss migrants’ difficulties in Europe. This sometimes resulted in resentment towards European governments and, to some extent, challenged migrants’ high status locally. But this ‘information’ (e.g. the visit to the *foyer*) certainly did not dissuade youths from

leaving, especially as many felt it was getting harder to migrate and thus was even more important to do so before it became completely impossible.

Conducting public discussions on migration was also delicate for the youths I met because of their ambiguous status locally. These association leaders, in contrast to the assumptions of the organisations they worked with, were not considered leaders in their community. They were also sometimes associated with the state by other youths, who were themselves very critical of their government. This fits with the observation made by others (e.g. Comaroff and Comaroff 1999) that the 'civil society' with which the development industry works in Africa is not neutral but often politically close to state power. However, the actual 'straddling' of brokers' associative and political roles noticed in other Senegalese contexts (e.g. Blundo 1995; Bouilly 2010) was not apparent in this study.

In practice, the young leaders avoided many conflicts by not making recommendations or giving advice to others. Discussions on migration were also often open and informal. This allowed for many relatively uncontroversial migration-related subjects being discussed. Additionally, and significantly, a large part of the work of the leaders I met took place with other NGOs and/or members of other associations and thus involved less contact with those situated outside the associations than might have been expected. This seems to be a current paradox of the strong emphasis development agencies place on 'non-state actors' or civil society groups. Indeed, the organisation by NGOs of workshops with these groups (including the production of material from these events) sometimes represents a development objective in itself. In addition, in the competition for resources, local development brokers might not always promote the involvement of the wider population.

In fact, by engaging in these counter-migration activities, the young leaders agentively reinterpreted (Crewe and Harrison 1998: 178-86; Mosse 2005) them as an alternative way to succeed in Dakar. That is, these involvements do not reflect self-disciplining subjectivities or commitments to develop the country or even to stay in Senegal. Another contradiction of development agencies, with decentralisation policies, is to aim to work with activists or the 'civil society' representing and following the input and ideology of the 'grassroots', supposedly motivated by altruism rather than individual interests; and, simultaneously, to expect local brokers to follow their demands, as well as behaving professionally when applying for funding and reporting to donors. Several of the young leaders I met were very aware of the constant change in NGOs' priorities and the flexibility required from them to work on new questions. As a consequence, my interlocutors viewed the discourses conveyed by these organisations with reserve. Their engagement with them, including activity 'against clandestine emigration', also formed part of strategies of 'extraversion' (Bayart 1999)⁷ or even of 'capture' (Olivier de Sardan 2005: 173-4). For my interlocutors, NGO work was a way to succeed locally: it represented a source of potential income or even employment, of travel (both inside and outside the country) and, in some cases, of symbolic profits. Travel is often both a precondition and an outcome of brokers' 'careers', as noted by Blundo (1995). The potential for travel, for my interlocutors, perhaps takes another dimension,

as it sometimes provides the chance to migrate. Participation in the campaigns is similarly associated by the repatriated migrants met by Pian (2010) with the possibility of obtaining a labour contract in Spain.

To access potential income, employment and travel opportunities, the brokers I met deployed much effort, entrepreneurship and many 'competences' (Bierschenk *et al.* 2002: 21). This included their 'translation' (Mosse and Lewis 2006: 13-7) of situations into terms that made sense and stressed their proximity to partners at both ends. From this perspective, speaking the 'development language' in NGOs' presence and aligning oneself with Northern/international agendas were key (Olivier de Sardan 2005: 182-3; Bouilly 2010; Pian 2010). Additionally, attending NGOs' 'training' sessions and meetings was crucial for being up to date with NGOs' latest fashions. In addition to these skills, a high level of education, a good command of English, the ability and readiness to use management methods and language, membership of several associations and international networks, and personal contacts in NGOs were key to the ability to raise funds (Bierschenk *et al.* 2002: 20-1, 23; Olivier de Sardan 2005: 174).

Therefore, young leaders' words regarding staying to 'develop' cannot be separated from the above conditions of brokerage. Put differently, if they could imagine remaining in the country, it was within the development system itself rather than because of a broader project or an abstract idea of 'development'. Simultaneously, staying to work with NGOs had its own limits. Indeed, although some ended up finding stable employment, for others the profits were small and uncertain. Moreover, for the young leaders of this study, the benefits of NGO work could not be compared to the benefits of migration. Although the opposition of development and migration was sometimes claimed in discussions with those associated with NGOs, it could not be sustained in practice (as Souleymane's initial return from France illustrates). Because of the limited benefits received from their involvement in activity 'against clandestine emigration', the agency of the young development brokers I met appears reduced relative to that of other civil society groups (e.g. Bouilly 2010). Their margin for manoeuvre is also limited compared to that of some of the local state actors involved in externalised EU policing measures, such as state agents in Niger who have enriched themselves through the closure of the Libyan border (Brachet 2005).

Conclusion

In sum, the awareness-raising activities studied here had little hold over the thoughts of Dakar youths, and were reappropriated by local development brokers. These 'preventative' measures, although appearing at first more likely to convince people to stay than physical barriers to mobility, were no more disciplining than policing measures. Theoretically, these conclusions add to research emphasising the force of human mobility and migrants' subjectivity over EU technologies of bordering, as opposed to the primacy of EU states' power over people's movements. They also challenge the idea that the IGOs and NGOs involved in the governmentality of migration on the behalf of EU states are *de facto* effective in this context. Although the violence and distressing effects of

policing measures cannot be downplayed, the present observations on awareness-raising measures tend to feed into the idea of the 'autonomy of migration' (e.g. De Genova 2017) in the sense that the 'politics of migration' here is often autonomous from the 'politics of control'. However, the fact that these awareness-raising measures are sometimes used by development brokers to actually migrate indicates that technologies of control are not completely irrelevant. As Scheel (2017) argues, in reference to Schengen visa application practices in the context of biometric border controls, the autonomist stance needs to take into account the 'appropriation' of mobility by aspiring migrants 'within and against a machine of illegalization'.

As was seen, if these activities did not change local subjectivities in the sense of challenging migration projects, this is mainly due to the existence of 'discontinuities' between agencies' and local perceptions of migration and of development. Also, if these activities were subverted by the association leaders I met, this was largely related to the past and present work of NGOs with them: in particular, the constant change of focus of the NGOs, the subsequent distance of young leaders from the discourses of these organisations, and their reinterpretation of development work as an alternative way to succeed. That is, the manner in which these organisations work contributed to neutralising the security objectives of these activities. These conclusions highlight the embeddedness of the social experiences of the externalised EU governmentality of mobility in local dynamics, including the role of these dynamics in providing people in regions of departure – as well as, potentially, migrants – with agency. These findings add to work emphasising the agentive role played in Africa by, for instance: global imaginaries of migration (Graw and Schielke 2012), the social imagery of migration success (Alpes 2012), a historical tradition of emigration (Gaibazzi 2015), and past and present everyday movements in a particular region (Choplin and Lombard 2014). The present paper and the above work suggest that the relations of people outside European territory with externalised EU technologies of control, including the notion of 'autonomy of migration', can be better analysed in an emic and contextualised way.

So, why are these campaigns still taking place and being funded by European governments when politicians are aware that they do not bring the purported results? The failure of externalised migration control measures has created a market for ever more controls (e.g. Andersson 2014). Additionally, EU bordering work sometimes takes a 'theatrical' dimension (Cuttitta 2014): in addition to trying to convince governments of origin and of 'transit' to manage migration, European governments want to retain their electoral support by being seen as 'doing something' against immigration. From this perspective, these campaigns can also be considered as part of the government of European populations.

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¹ See <https://www.iom.int/news/iom-italy-launch-aware-migrants-campaign>; <http://www.awaremigrants.org/>. The use of 'information' campaigns as a tool of migration control is, however, not recent. Campaigns depicting the unattractive conditions of asylum-seekers and migrants in Europe have been organised in many countries since the early 1990s in the context of IOM activities against human trafficking (Nieuwenhuys and Pécoud 2007: 1682-3).

² In other words, leaving without a visa (rather than just entering Europe without one) has been portrayed as illegitimate.

³ A *pirogue* is a wooden fishing boat.

⁴ In total, three youth groups were studied: a student association, a youth association in a 'middle-class' area of Dakar and a youth group in a deprived suburban area of town. Data were collected during a one-year fieldwork including participant observation, interviews and focus groups. Meetings on the topic of migration held between youth groups and NGOs, as well as with other youths, were attended. However, rather than providing a comprehensive account of these sessions, the objective was to understand how these activities translated into the lives of young leaders. This involved accompanying them in their daily routines, within and outside their associations. All names have been changed to respect privacy.

⁵ This comment referred to the French government's then newly announced possibilities of 'legal migration' for those with specific professions in demand in the French market, as well as to legal-migration contracts issued sporadically by Spain.

⁶ CFA 4 million was then about £5,000, and CFA 300,000 a little less than £400.

⁷ That is, their engagement can be understood as a way to instrumentalise their access to, and dependency on, the outside world.